

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Agenda item:

Page no:

Meeting:	Grants Advisory Panel
Date:	27 th July 2004
Subject:	Strategic Review of Grants - Update
Key decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Director, Financial and Business Strategy, Business Connections
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Partnership & Property
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	N / A
Enclosures:	Consultation documents MORI Consultation Results (To Follow)

1. **Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)**

- 1.1 The Grants Advisory Panel is requested to consider the outcome of the consultation with the Voluntary Sector, before finalising its recommendations to Cabinet at the Panel meeting on 13th September 2004.

2. **Recommendations (for decision by Portfolio Holder)**

- 2.1 **That Members consider the report from MORI on the consultation and advise on any changes to the proposed strategy in the light of the consultation results, prior to finalising recommendations to Cabinet at the Panel meeting on 13th September 2004.**

REASON: To enable the Grants Advisory Panel to take account of the results of the voluntary sector consultation prior to finalising its recommendations to Cabinet.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors.**

3.1 None

4. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

4.1 Cabinet 15th October 2002- Agreed to transfer of the Education Lettings service to the Grants Advisory Panel with effect from April 2004 and to establish criteria for eligibility.

4.2 Grants Advisory Panel 19th September 2003 – Considered certain new funding priorities and agreed that they should form part of the strategic review of grants.

4.3 Grants Advisory Panel 19th February 2004 – Agreed the timetable for the review of support to voluntary organisations.

4.4 Grants Advisory Panel 27th April 2004 – The Panel considered the suggested strategic approach for the future administration of support to voluntary organisations and authorised officers to consult the voluntary sector on the new proposals.

4.5 Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee 13th July 2004 – To consider the Panel's strategic proposals the consultation process and provide any comments for the Panel's consideration.

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

5.1 This report addresses the Council's stated priority of "strengthening Harrow's local communities by promoting social inclusion amongst all Harrow residents both young and old, by seeking to eradicate poverty and by reducing the fear of crime."

6 **Background Information and options considered**

6.1 On 27th April 2004 Members approved the recommended strategy for supporting the Voluntary Sector in Harrow and authorised officers to carry out a two-stage consultation with the Voluntary Sector. In the 1st stage the consultation involved 9 umbrella groups as well as the Chairs of the Primary and Secondary Headteachers' Associations and the Chair of the Association of Harrow Governing Bodies. The consultation documents were sent out on 19th May 2004 and responses were due to be received by Friday 11th June 2004.

6.2 For the 2nd stage consultation the Council consulted 426 community groups, many of which are in receipt of some form of support from the Council. In order to expedite the process and ensure transparency and accountability, the Council commissioned MORI to conduct the 2nd stage consultation. MORI carried out a postal survey of the 426 groups from 14th June to 12th July 2004. They also carried out depth interviews with 10 umbrella groups suggested by the Council. MORI will provide a combined report on the postal survey and the depth interviews by Friday 23rd July 2004 and this will be tabled at the Panel's meeting.

6.3 Members need to note that the wording in the Community Strategy Priorities was changed slightly following consultation. This is reflected in the Strategic Review Consultation document. In view of this, Members may wish to approve the wording of the agreed Common Grants Criteria, before they are reported to Cabinet.

7. **Consultation**

- 7.1 Extensive consultation has been carried out as set out above. Similar consultation will be undertaken in respect of other aspects of the review.
- 7.2 A report setting out the strategic proposals together with the documents relating to the consultation with the voluntary sector was presented to the Strengthening Communities Sub-Committee at its meeting on 13th July.
- 7.3 The purpose of this report was to seek comments from the Sub-Committee in order to inform the decisions of the panel.
- 7.4 There were two main comments made:
- (a) That more emphasis should be given to monitoring the performance of the groups against targets set and that this should inform the Panel's decisions on future funding.
 - (b) In respect of groups which may no longer qualify for funding under the new community strategy criteria, the Council should place more emphasis on assisting groups to meet their objectives through capacity building advice and access to wider Council support.

8. **Finance Observations**

- 8.1 This is a report of the Director of Financial and Business Strategy and deals with financial matters throughout.

9. **Legal Observations**

- 9.1 None.

10. **Conclusion**

- 10.1 The strategic review of grants is proposing a new Council-wide system of providing support to voluntary sector in Harrow. The voluntary sector has been consulted extensively on the review. The involvement of MORI in the collection and analysis of responses ensured transparency to the process of consultation.

11. **Background Papers**

- 11.1 None

12. **Author**

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